

## Quotes from “Partisanship in the New Legislature”

**Freeley:** The minority leader’s job was the most interesting job in the legislature because you had to exercise discipline in your caucus. And dealing with the majority party, you had to on occasion get in their face, take an opposing point of view, argue passionately, but you did so with civility.

**Freed:** I made it a point to have breakfast once a week with the minority leader, even though we had different political viewpoints. We’d meet in the Capitol before the week’s session started and go over the agenda for the week. We would talk about where we agreed, where we disagreed, where we expected floor fights.

**Davidson:** If you reach out and do some things for minority members—even just personal courtesies to them or their families, you build a stronger body.

**Hamilton:** The most difficult part about the job [minority leader] for me was helping my people understand that they were the loyal opposition. That they are not the majority. They are not going to run the place. They don’t get to do what committee chairs do. But they do have a responsible place in the process and their job is to do that.

**Moe:** When I felt something had the potential of really bogging us down in a partisan way, I would call the Republican leader and say, “Would you come over and bring your three people who are key on this topic?” And I’d get the three people who I trusted most in that particular area. And we’d sit down and talk it out. I did that time after time and avoided a lot of divisive issues.

**Moe:** I also made a point of no surprises. When we were going to do something, I always informed the other caucus. I got the same thing in return. Everything was spelled out.

**Freed:** Sometimes it’s hard to pull back. The stakes are high. There is a role that partisanship plays in governments and politics. But that ‘all or none’ attitude instead of ‘let’s negotiate and find a middle ground’ can get in the way of good public policy.

**Davidson:** Legislators have to understand that the image of the legislative body is driven a great deal by how people feel about whether or not lawmakers can come together and actually do something meaningful. I think it's going to be a challenge for leadership in the future much more than it's been in the past. Partisanship must give way to good, solid leadership that knows how to build consensus.

**Davidson:** I think leaders, every once in a while, have to step forward and put their members feet to the fire. They have to say, "It's time that we dealt with this issue."

**Davidson:** I do believe that during any challenge to the institution—particularly ethics issues—leaders have a responsibility to the institution over their caucus.

**Feeley:** Standing next to leadership on the other side of the aisle and defending the institution when the institution is under attack is absolutely essential and is one of the small prices of leadership. You may be antagonizing people who you are going to count on for the next leadership vote. But it's a cost of leadership and you have to be willing to pay it.

**Freed:** Having to say no to some of the people who helped elect me speaker. That's tough. It's hard to do and makes political enemies along the way. Sometimes it just has to be done.

**Hamilton:** Denying your members something they want, or asking them for something that they don't want to give, are just awfully tough things to do.

**Davidson:** I think you have to defend the independence of the body that you're leading. In doing that you didn't always make a lot of friends with the other two entities.

**Moe:** Somebody has to say no. We can't do it all. Maintaining the independence of your House is important.